



Coventry City Council

Public report

Report to

Audit and Procurement Committee

26th July 2021

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership – Councillor G Duggins

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Finance

Ward(s) affected:

City Wide

Title:

Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

The purpose of this report is to provide details of the results of the annual review of effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and seek approval for the Annual Governance Statement, which forms part of the Statement of Accounts for 2020-21.

Recommendations:

Audit and Procurement Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Consider the findings of the review of effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements and confirm its satisfaction with the level of assurance provided that arrangements are fit for purpose.
- 2) Consider and approve the Annual Governance Statement (attached at Appendix 1 to the report), which will accompany the 2020-21 Statement of Accounts.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

Annual Governance Statement 2019-20

<https://edemocracy.coventry.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=553&MId=12269&Ver=4>

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it, or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 Coventry City Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. In discharging this responsibility, the City Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.2 To demonstrate such arrangements, the City Council has adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles reflected in the CIPFA / SOLACE framework and guidance 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' (2016).
- 1.3 The Annual Governance Statement ('AGS') explains how Coventry City Council has complied with the Code and in doing so, reflects the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, which requires all relevant bodies to conduct a review of the effectiveness of its system of governance and prepare an Annual Governance Statement. The AGS also details key governance / control issues that the Council faces in the coming year.
- 1.4 It is important the Annual Governance Statement is current at time of final publication (i.e. when the Statement of Accounts is published.) As such, the Council's governance arrangements will continue to be kept under review and an update will be provided to the Audit and Procurement Committee in the event that there are significant changes to the Statement.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 Whilst processes are in place to assess key elements of the governance framework through-out the year, for example through the work of Internal Audit, the Corporate Governance Steering Board and the Council's Audit and Procurement Committee, an annual review is also undertaken as part of the production of the AGS for the year. The purpose of the review is to provide assurance that arrangements continue to be fit for purpose and identify key governance issues for the forthcoming year. This annual review incorporates a number of processes with the outcomes reviewed and agreed by the Corporate Governance Steering Board and Strategic Management Board. For 2020-21, this has included:
 - The outputs from the Internal Audit Service, reflected in an annual report that identifies those issues, which in the opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor, should be considered when producing the Annual Governance Statement.
 - Reports from external bodies during the year, including those from the Council's external auditors and other inspection agencies.
 - Consideration of the Council's Corporate Risk Register and Covid-19 Risk Register.
 - An annual assessment by each Director of the adequacy of governance arrangements / internal controls in relation to their service areas.

- An initial assessment of the Council's compliance with the principles and standards of the CIPFA Financial Management Code, which supports good practice in financial management and demonstrating financial sustainability.
- Assessment of the role of the S151 Officer against the requirements stated in the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016.)
- An annual review against the principles and best practice set out in the Code of Corporate Governance. In 2020-21, the review has focused on considering the impact of Covid-19 on governance arrangements and assessment of the effectiveness where the Council has been required to adapt its arrangements.

2.2 Based on the outcomes of the review, the overall opinion that has been reached is that reasonable assurance can be provided that the Council's governance arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The basis of this opinion includes the following key findings from the review:

- The Chief Internal Auditor's opinion that moderate assurance can be provided that there is generally an effective and adequate framework of governance, risk management and internal control in place designed to meet the Council's objectives.
- An initial self-assessment of the Council's compliance with the Financial Management Code which has concluded that the Council is in a relatively strong position with regards to having good and sustainable financial management.
- An assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's governance arrangements which has concluded that taken as a whole the Council's arrangements have continued to be effective in delivering against the principles of good governance as outlined in the Local Code of Governance. Examples of how this has been demonstrated include the positive financial outturn position for 2020-21, the significant progress made to relation to the Council's programme of capital investment, the provision of public access to meetings through webcast facilities and processes to ensure transparency over emergency decision making.
- Positive inspection findings from the Care Quality Commission in relation to Council run social care services.
- Assurance that the Council has identified key risks emerging as a result of Covid-19 and has put in place appropriate measures to manage risk.
- Assurance obtained from Directors that there are no significant concerns in relation to governance within their service areas.
- The conclusion that the role of the S151 Officer within the Council meets the principles of the CIPFA statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government
- The draft audit findings from the Council's external auditors. Whilst it is acknowledged that the final audit opinion is still to be issued, the expectation remains that the auditors will issue an unqualified value for money conclusion on the Council for 2019-20.

2.3 The AGS also details the key governance issues that the Council faces in the coming year. Section 5.3 of Statement, attached at Appendix One, provides details of these areas. Whilst the process of identifying the issues is co-ordinated by the Chief Internal Auditor, it also incorporates the views and opinions of senior officers, the Council's Governance

Steering Board and Strategic Management Board. The key issues come from the following processes:

- A review of progress against the actions planned to address significant issues highlighted in the Annual Governance Statement for 2019-20.
- New issues identified as part of the review of effectiveness outlined in section 2.1.

The outcomes from these processes are expanded upon below.

2.4 Update on issues raised in the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20 – An update on the progress against planned actions in relation to the issues raised in the 2019-20 AGS is provided in section 5.1 of the Statement attached at Appendix One. A review of the 16 issues highlighted in the AGS for 2019-20 has found that these fall into two categories, namely:

2.4.1 Issues which have now been addressed – Two issues have been closed as they are no longer viewed as a significant governance issue facing the Council and will not be carried forward to the 2021-22 action plan:

- **Delivery of the People Plan:** Significant progress has been made to deliver the plan including launch of the Council's values and Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, introduction of an electronic casework system and new reward platform, review of an number of policies and procedures and increase in the number of health and wellbeing initiatives in response to the pandemic. There are now four strategy documents namely the People Plan, Employee Health Well-Being Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Engagement Pan that detail the work of the HR service. All these documents have measurable outcomes, stated timelines, with accountable officers which are now being delivered. Progress and achievement can be evidenced, thus making this business as usual. As a result, this issue has not been carried forward to the 2021-22 action plan.
- **Acting on the outcomes of the review of the Council's Scrutiny function:** Appropriate recommendations were built into the scrutiny approach for 2020-21 including stronger scoping and prioritisation of items and more engagement of Cabinet Members. A Scrutiny Protocol and approach to work planning is being developed and training for chairs and scrutiny members has been scheduled for the start of the new municipal year and built into the new Member Development and Training programme. As appropriate actions have been completed, this issue has not been carried forward to the 2021-22 action plan.

2.4.2 Carry forward to the 2021-22 Action Plan - A number of governance issues remain in the Annual Governance Statement. It is worth noting that for some issues, the pandemic did create challenges in delivering the actions planned in 2020-21 in the timescales originally envisaged and required the focus of activity to be re-shaped. These governance issues are detailed in section 5.3 of the Statement attached at Appendix One, along with the actions the Council plans to take in 2021-22 in relation to these issues. In summary, the issues that have been carried forward to the 2021-22 Action Plan are as follows:

- Sustainable improvement in Children's Services.
- Ensuring delivery of the Council's vision and corporate objectives, in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- Raising educational standards.

- Implementation of the Information Management Strategy.
- Management of increasing demand in relation to homelessness and the associated costs of housing families in temporary accommodation.
- Development of a corporate data access standard.
- Governance over relationships with partners and outside bodies.
- Governance over the programme of capital projects.
- City of Culture legacy.
- Strengthening arrangements linked to the programme of health and safety audits undertaken.
- Further development of the Council's IT Disaster recovery plans and processes.
- Review and update of the Social Value and Sustainability Policy.
- Implementation of the Local Government Ethical Standards Best Practice from the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- Implementation of the Redmond Review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting.

2.5 **New Governance Issues** – Six new issues have been identified for the Annual Governance Statement. These are also detailed in section 5.3 of the Statement attached at Appendix One, along with the actions the Council plans to take in 2021-22 in relation to these issues. These issues were identified as part of the review undertaken to support the production of the AGS as detailed in 2.1 and are summarised below:

- Further strengthening the Council's arrangements and internal control environment around IT / Cyber Security.
- Improving the system for identifying, evaluating, controlling and monitoring information risks (this has been incorporated into the wider issue of delivery of the Information Management Strategy.)
- Demonstrating compliance with the Financial Management Code.
- Ensuring robust governance over group activities / investments.
- Embedding new methods of consultation and engagement.
- Refresh of the One Coventry Plan.

2.6 Notwithstanding the issues which have been identified through the annual review, it is recognised that the Council is not in a position at the current time to understand all of the longer-term impacts of Covid-19 on the Council's priorities and achievement of sustainable outcomes. This will remain a key area of focus during the forthcoming year and will be considered in the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement for 2021-22.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

3.1 None

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

4.1 Timescales for specific actions which are being taken to address significant governance issues are included in the Annual Governance Statement.

5. Comments from the Director of Finance and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1 Financial Implications

There are no specific financial implications associated with this report. Internal control / governance, have clear and direct effects on finance within the Council. Since these vary widely, it is not useful to attempt to summarise them here, beyond noting that all systems and controls are designed to help improve value for money obtained, the probity and propriety of financial administration, and / or the management of operational risks.

5.2 Legal implications

The City Council is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 to approve, and subsequently publish, the Annual Governance Statement alongside the Statement of Accounts.

6. Other implications

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council Plan?

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes (i.e. the internal control environment), and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled, and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The key risk that exists is that planned actions are not implemented. This risk is managed through the Council's governance framework which includes arrangements to provide oversight of planned actions through reporting to senior management and designated committees / boards. Defined processes also exist to gain assurance that agreed actions arising from the work of Internal Audit, External Audit or another external agency have been implemented on a timely basis.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4 Equalities / EIA

None

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment

No impact

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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Barry Hastie	Director of Finance	-	7/7/2021	13/7/2021
Julie Newman	Director of Law and Governance	-	7/7/2021	14/7/2021
Councillor G Duggins	Cabinet Member for Policy and Leadership	-	7/7/2021	8/7/2021

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings

Appendix One – Annual Governance Statement 2020-21

1. Scope of responsibility

- 1.1 Coventry City Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. Coventry City Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 1.2 In discharging this overall responsibility, Coventry City Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3 Coventry City Council has an approved Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles reflected in the CIPFA / SOLACE framework and guidance *Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016)*. A copy of the Code is available on our website at:
http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/3639/code_of_corporate_governance_2017
or can be obtained from Governance Services.
- 1.4 The Annual Governance Statement explains how Coventry City Council has complied with the Code and also meets the requirements of Regulation 6(1) (b) of The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an Annual Governance Statement and the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021.

2. The purpose of the governance framework

- 2.1 The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the Authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.
- 2.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can, therefore, only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of Coventry City Council policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.
- 2.3 The governance framework has been in place at Coventry City Council for the year ended 31st March 2021 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

3. The governance framework

The key principles, approach and review processes that comprise the authority's governance arrangements are set out in the City Council's Code of Corporate Governance. Key elements include the following:

- 3.1 There is a governance / internal control environment that supports the Council in establishing, implementing and monitoring its policies and objectives. The Council's overarching objectives are contained in published policy documents including the Council Plan. These high-level plans are supported by a range of thematic policies, strategies and delivery plans, service plans, and detailed work programmes.
- 3.2 Coventry's Council Plan sets out the Council's long-term vision and priorities for the city for the period 2016-2024. In 2018, the Plan was reviewed and rebranded in line with the Council's emerging One Coventry approach and a revised performance management framework has been introduced to improve transparency and streamline performance reporting with more regular information updates about the performance of the city. To deliver the Council's long-term vision and priorities, the Council Plan affirms the Council's commitment to do this by maximising the use of its assets and reducing its operating costs, and through active communities and empowered citizens. The Council Plan is part of the Council's overall performance management framework designed to help the Council deliver its services and use its resources effectively in a planned and systematic way. A copy of the plan is available on our website at www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/ and the performance management framework is at: http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/5245/performance_management_framework
- 3.3 Throughout this process, clear channels of communication exist with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, to ensure the Council considers local needs and communicates both expected and actual outcomes for citizens and service users. This is evidenced through the Council's formal decision-making and performance management processes.
- 3.4 In October 2015, Coventry City Council agreed to join the proposed West Midlands Combined Authority, which is a model of governance for local authorities to act together to drive economic prosperity for the area. A Combined Authority is a statutory body in its own right supported by a devolution agreement with the Government and a constitution which sets out the terms of their funding and powers.
- 3.5 In December 2017, it was announced that Coventry had been named the UK City of Culture for 2021. The aim of this programme is to encourage the use of culture and creativity as a catalyst for change, to promote the development of new partnerships and to encourage ambition, innovation and inspiration in cultural and creative activity. This activity will make significant contributions to the delivery of the Council Plan and corporate priorities. Coventry City of Culture Trust has been set up to organise and deliver this activity and has been formally incorporated and received charitable status. Financial responsibility for the Trust's activities lie with the Chair and Trustees, with an independent Audit Committee providing scrutiny and oversight. As accountable body and guarantor for delivery of the UK City of Culture 2021 programme, Coventry City Council is a principal partner in supporting the work of the Trust and ensuring that there is good governance around the Trust meeting the City of Culture programme delivery and legacy ambitions.
- 3.6 The control environment to ensure delivery of the Council's objectives is laid down in the Council's Constitution and performance management framework. The Constitution sets out how the Council operates, including:
- Roles and responsibilities of both Councillors and officers, including the Head of Paid Services, Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

- How decisions are made and the procedures in place to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local citizens. The Constitution includes the Council's senior management structure and a scheme of delegation which sets out the principles for decision making and responsibility for functions. The Council facilitates policy and decision making via a Cabinet structure with Cabinet Member portfolios. There are scrutiny boards covering all portfolios and an overarching Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee. The Member decision making, advisory and scrutiny bodies are shown at <http://www.coventry.gov.uk/howthecouncilworks>
- 3.7 Coventry City Council has developed a comprehensive set of policies and procedures, including those relating to the standards expected of Members and officers. These are subject to regular review to ensure the Council continues to enhance and strengthen its internal control environment. Systems exist to ensure compliance with policies and procedures, including statute and regulations. Internal Audit, through its annual risk-based plan assesses compliance with key procedures and policies.
- 3.8 The Council has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Commitment which is available on our website at: [equality, diversity and inclusion commitment](#). This sets out the Council's commitment to meeting all areas of the public sector equality duty and to ensure equality of opportunity, both as a provider and commissioner of services and as a large employer. The commitment is implemented through setting equality objectives linked to the Council Plan. In 2020, a new set of equality objectives were approved and are available on our website at: [Equality Objectives | Equality and Diversity | Coventry City Council](#). Progress is monitored and reported to the Cabinet Member (Policing & Equalities). In 2020, a large scale EIA was carried out to assess the local impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the delivery of Council services and can be viewed on our website at: [pre-budget report Covid EIA](#).
- 3.9 The Council's Risk Management Strategy defines processes for identifying, assessing, managing and monitoring financial and operational risks. The Strategy recognises the need for risk registers at directorate and corporate level which are updated and reviewed regularly. The Council is looking for continuous improvement throughout the Council in the management of risks, and this is being monitored through the Strategic Management Board.
- 3.10 The Council, through its Whistleblowing and Complaints Procedures, has documented processes in place to deal with concerns raised by both employees and members of the public. These policies have been widely communicated and are subject to regular review to ensure they are working effectively. In addition, the Council's Fraud and Corruption Strategy reinforces the Council's commitment to creating an anti-fraud culture, whilst having effective arrangements in place in responding to allegations of fraud and corruption.
- 3.11 An Audit and Procurement Committee provides independent assurance to the Council on various issues, including risk management and control and the effectiveness of the arrangements the Council has for these matters. The Committee's terms of reference were developed in conjunction with CIPFA guidance, and the Committee carries out a periodic self-assessment to measure its effectiveness, based on recommended CIPFA practice.
- 3.12 For the financial year 2020-21, the Director of Finance was the nominated Section 151 Officer, with the delegated responsibility for ensuring there are arrangements in place for proper administration of financial affairs. The Council last carried out an assessment of the role of the Section 151 Officer against the requirements stated in the CIPFA

Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2016) in April 2021. This assessment concluded that the Authority meets the five principles laid out in the CIPFA statement, namely:

- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in a local authority is a key member of the Leadership Team, helping it to develop and implement strategy and to resource and deliver the authority's strategic objectives sustainably and in the public interest.
- The CFO in a local authority must be actively involved in, and able to bring influence to bear on, all material business decisions to ensure immediate and longer-term implications, opportunities and risks are fully considered, and alignment with the authority's overall financial strategy.
- The CFO in a local authority must lead the promotion and delivery by the whole authority of good financial management so that public money is safeguarded at all times and used appropriately, economically, efficiently, and effectively.
- The CFO in a local authority must lead and direct a finance function that is resourced to be fit for purpose.
- The CFO in a local authority must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced.

The S151 Officer is a key member of the Council's Strategic Management Board with a critical role in strategic planning for the organisation. The Board also includes the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, who, along with the S151 Officer, collectively have leadership responsibility for good governance as principal statutory officers. The CFO is also part of the Council's Corporate Leadership Team which consists of all of the Directors of the Council.

3.13 The Annual Governance Statement also includes a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control within group activities, where the Council is in a relationship with another entity to undertake significant activities. The following describes the group activities for the year ended 31st March 2021:

- The Coventry and Solihull Waste Disposal Company Limited is owned jointly by Coventry City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and Leicestershire County Council. A formal agreement sets out the governance arrangements between the shareholders. The Company is subject to the Industrial Emissions Directive and the conditions of its Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency. Furthermore, the Company monitors its activities through an Environmental Management System accredited to the ISO 14001 standard, its Health and Safety Management System which is certified to the OHSAS ISO45001 standard and the Cyber Essentials accreditation it has achieved for its IT systems. The Company has appointed Ernst & Young LLP as its external auditors. The last published Annual Report and Financial Statements, for the year ended 31st March 2020, did not highlight any concerns. The accounts contain an auditor emphasis of matter note referencing the consequences the company is facing as a result of coronavirus but there is no indication that the coronavirus outbreak represents a likely threat to the Company's ability to continue as a going concern.
- North Coventry Holdings (NCH) Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council. All the Directors of the Company are senior officers of Coventry City Council. All transactions are processed using the Council's financial systems and such activities

are subject to an annual audit by the Council's Internal Audit Service. The Company has LDP Luckmans as its external auditors. There was an unqualified audit opinion for the last published Annual Report and Accounts, for the year ended 31st March 2020. The company's main purpose is to hold shares in Coventry North Regeneration Limited, although it is also engaged in providing business development services to the City Council.

- Coventry North Regeneration (CNR) Limited is a wholly owned subsidiary of NCH Limited. The main activity of the Company was the construction of the Ricoh Arena. All the Directors of the Company are also senior officers of Coventry City Council. All transactions are processed using the Council's financial systems and such activities are subject to an annual audit by the Council's Internal Audit Service. The Company has LDP Luckmans as its external auditors. There was an unqualified audit opinion for the last published Annual Report and Accounts, for the year ended 31st March 2020.
- Coombe Abbey Park Limited (CAPL) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council, which acquired 100% of the ordinary share capital of the company in December 2017. The purpose of the company is to operate Coombe Abbey Hotel. The three directors of the Company are senior officers of Coventry City Council. The Company has appointed RSM UK Audit LLP as its external auditors. The last published Annual Report and Financial Statements, for the year ended 31st December 2019, did not highlight any significant concerns. The financial statements were prepared on a going concern basis notwithstanding a reported loss within the accounts. This position was based on an undertaking that the parent entity (Coventry City Council) will continue to make such funds as are needed by the company. The Council approved a report in March 2021 which provided for the company's outstanding liabilities to the Council to be refinanced and further cash-flow support to be made available to the company in the light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The UK Battery Industrialisation Centre Ltd was incorporated on 27th February 2018 and the Council is currently the sole shareholder with 1 share which has a nominal value of £1. The purpose of the company is to run the proposed National Battery Development Facility for which the final part of fit-out is expected to be complete in the early Summer of 2021. The Council has appointed two of its officers as directors on the board. The company will ultimately become a Joint Venture Private Limited Company with the Warwick Manufacturing Group. The City Council is initially purchasing all land and equipment in relation to the facility with funding coming from Innovate UK which is a Government backed agency and the West Midlands Combined Authority. The Company has appointed RSM UK Audit LLP as its external auditors. The notes to the most recent audited accounts to 31st December 2019 state that delays in the start of commercial operation and in securing contracted revenue represent issues of material uncertainty that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the company to continue as a going concern. However, the directors have stated a reasonable expectation that the company will have adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future through further grant funding if needed and they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.
- The Friargate Joint Venture Project Ltd was incorporated on 17th December 2018. This is a 50/50 joint venture with Friargate Holdings 2 Limited, established to develop new buildings within the Friargate district of the city. In this regard, construction works have now begun on a second new office building and preparations are well developed to enable the provision of a new hotel within the Friargate district. Each of,

Coventry City Council and Friargate Holdings 2 Ltd have been issued 1 Ordinary Share for a value of £10m each. The Council has appointed three of its officers as directors of the board.

- Tom White Waste Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Council, having acquired 100% of the shares in the company in March 2020. Two of the three Directors of the Company are senior officers of Coventry City Council, the third being a senior officer of North Coventry Holdings, another wholly owned subsidiary of the City Council. During the first year of ownership, the board have reviewed and implemented a new management structure, appointing to key strategic positions including the Managing Director and Financial Controller. It has also during the first year of ownership implemented a robust financial and operational performance reporting process and taken the initiative to ensure full compliance with key legislative requirements in particular Health and Safety. This together with the Covid-19 pandemic, has made 2020/21 a challenging year with a number of one off adverse financial implications, however the Company has continued in overall terms to trade relatively strongly and have proven to be resilient. The Board of Directors is currently considering its business plan for the next 3 years which will be growth focused and could include the integration of the Council's existing commercial waste function. The company's existing auditors, Azets (formerly Baldwins) have been retained for the audit of 2020/21 financial accounts. Their previous audit for the published Annual Report and Financial Accounts dated 31 March 2020 delivered an unqualified opinion.
- Sherbourne Recycling Limited (SRL) was incorporated on the 25th February 2021 and Coventry City Council along with seven other local authorities acquired shares in the company on the 1st April 2021. The purpose of the company is to manage the construction of a material recycling facility (MRF) and then operate the facility, which will sort the dry mixed recyclable waste received from the eight local authorities and other commercial customers. In addition to Coventry City Council, the other seven authorities each have a representative who is a Council officer on the Board of Directors. Each council has voting rights in proportion to their shareholding. The construction of the facility is being funded by debt and equity finance being provided by the local authorities. The facility is expected to be operational in the summer 2023. Sherbourne Recycling Trading Limited is a trading subsidiary of Sherbourne Recycling Limited who own 100% of the shares in this entity. All commercial contracts will be secured through this entity with the waste being processed by SRL on an arm's length transaction. The Board of the Directors for the two companies is the same as is the voting rights.

4. Review of effectiveness

- 4.1 Processes are in place to assess key elements of the governance framework throughout the year, for example, through the work of Internal Audit and the Council's Audit and Procurement Committee. A review of the effectiveness of the governance framework is also undertaken annually as part of the production of the Annual Governance Statement. This is informed by the work of senior managers within the authority, who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of Coventry City Council's risk management, internal control and governance arrangements, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

4.2 Arrangements to assess the effectiveness of the governance framework include:

- Regular and detailed monitoring of the Council's performance, by both Strategic Management Board and Members against targets and objectives set out in the Council's Plan.
- Regular meetings of the Council's Governance Steering Board to consider on-going and emerging governance issues and co-ordinate actions required. Updates on this work are provided to Strategic Management Board every month.
- Consideration of ethical governance matters by the Ethics Committee, including reflecting on national governance failings to identify if there are any lessons learnt for the Council to take forward.
- On-going reviews of the Council's Constitution, overseen by the Constitution Advisory Panel and subject to approval by Full Council. These reviews include areas such as standing orders, financial procedures and the scheme of delegation.
- Regular reviews of the Council's strategies and procedures to ensure they continue to reflect the needs of the Council.
- An annual review against the principles and best practice set out in the Code of Corporate Governance and which is used to identify improvements to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements. In 2020-21, the review has focused on considering the impact of Covid-19 on governance arrangements and assessment of the effectiveness where the Council has been required to adapt its arrangements.

4.3 The review of effectiveness has also been informed by:

- Reports from the external auditors and other inspection agencies.
- The Council's Corporate Risk Register and Covid-19 Risk Register.
- Directors' Statements of Assurance. An annual assessment of the adequacy of governance arrangements / internal controls in relation to their service areas by each Director.
- An initial assessment of the Council's compliance with the principles and standards of the CIPFA Financial Management Code, which supports good practice in financial management and demonstrating financial sustainability. Whilst 2021-22 is the first full year of compliance, CIPFA have recognised the additional burdens placed on local authorities as a result of the pandemic and have allowed for further flexibility in progressing plans for implementation during 2021-22.
- The work of the Internal Audit Service during 2020-21. The Service works to a risk-based audit plan, which is approved annually by the Council's Audit and Procurement Committee. An annual report is also produced and presented to the Committee. The report identifies those issues, which in the opinion of the Chief Internal Auditor, should be considered when producing the Annual Governance Statement.

4.4 We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit and Procurement Committee and can provide reasonable assurance that the Council's governance arrangements continue to be

regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework and that a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

5. Significant governance issues

5.1 Table one below provides an update on the governance issues that were raised in the 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement. It is clear that for some issues, the coronavirus pandemic has created challenges in delivering the planned actions in the timescales originally envisaged and re-shaped the focus of activity. However, the Council remains committed to enhancing its governance arrangements and where actions have been delayed, revised timescales have been agreed and are reflected in the action plan for 2021-22.

Table one

No	Governance issues identified in 2019-20	2020-21 update
1	Sustainable improvement in Children's Services	<p>The Local Safeguarding Partnership is now embedded and established as business as usual. It receives quarterly reports on progress.</p> <p>There are number of further transformational projects underway under the banner of continuous improvement. Quality Assurance visits have continued and involve the cabinet member and the Children's Senior Leadership Team.</p> <p>Service performance reviews did not take place this year due to the pandemic however a reduced but full program of quality assurance activity did take place.</p> <p>The workforce strategy action plan has been delivered on and a new strategy and action plan has been implemented for this year.</p>
2	Ensuring delivery of the Council's vision and corporate objectives, in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy	<p>The financial outturn position for 2020/21 reflects a better than balanced position including taking account of the costs and grant funding relating to COVID-19.</p> <p>The Council has approved a balanced 2021/22 budget managed without the need to make additional service savings.</p>
3	Raising educational standards	<p>Key stage 1 and 2 SATs, and Key stage 4 assessments did not take place in the 19/20 or 20/21 academic year, although we will have teacher assessment for Key Stage 4. In addition, OFSTED graded inspections have not taken place since March 2020. The co-created annual actions and key principles for the 20/21 academic year were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement and manage proportionate Covid-19 protective measures for children and staff, which also ensure that all pupils receive a high-quality education that enables them to thrive and progress. • Improve educational outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) across all key stages, including in the early years. • Develop children and young people's emotional resilience and mental health and well-being to support both a successful return to learning and continued home/remote

		<p>learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an approach to remote education that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ provides targeted support for young people who have limited digital and internet access to ensure they can engage in remote education ➤ is integrated into school curriculum planning ➤ ensures pupils are given the support they need to master the curriculum and so make good progress ➤ ensures online activity is monitored in order to keep children safe
4	Implementation of the Information Management Strategy	<p>Following the appointment of the new Senior Information Risk Owner, the Information Management Strategy Group (IMSG) was reconvened, and the Terms of Reference and Information Management Strategy were approved at the meeting held in April 2021.</p> <p>The Training Strategy is in final draft and with IMSG for consultation.</p> <p>The Council's response to the pandemic has taken the priority from embedding data security and information risk management, however it has subsequently brought information security to the forefront with remote working/new ways of carrying out job roles.</p> <p>Once the Council's recovery plan is felt across the organisation more focus can be given to imbedding information risk management, however progress is being made behind the scenes and Head of Information Governance is consulting with external partners on tried and tested best practice.</p> <p>New mandatory training has not been put to Strategic Management Board as they have been conducting their own review of all mandatory training offered. The opportunity was taken to separate Data Protection training from this review as training content and delivery method are being considered to ensure that all employees may be offered suitable and relevant training on the subject matter.</p>
5	Delivery of the People Plan	<p>The Council's values were formally launched in April. The values have been publicised in several ways and have been embedded into the appraisal process for 21/22. An engagement plan has been developed in conjunction with the Communication Team to further build the values into the processes such as recruitment as well as undertaking greater employee engagement. The plan has a survey timescale built in, so we do seek and listen to the employee experience.</p> <p>The Diversity and Inclusion Strategy has been developed in partnership with the Employee Networks and the Trades Unions, with a launch week of the 21st June 2021 with a week of related learning and engagement.</p> <p>An electronic casework system was introduced in March and has improved the recording and management information of casework. Plus, a new reward platform was introduced in January and we are now able to offer cars, discount vouchers, cycle to work scheme, bikes, technology and lifestyle goods. We continue to look to review and revise our offer to ensure we are competitive.</p> <p>Several policies and procedures have been reviewed and revised including; Lifelong Learning, Recruitment and Selection, Continuing to work flexibly and Family Friendly Policies. This</p>

		<p>also includes the provision of related training where appropriate. We continue to review and revise the remaining policies.</p> <p>The last year has seen health and well-being initiatives increase to support Covid-19 but also in response to the feedback received from staff surveys. We have developed and introduced a Health and Well-Being Plan for staff which details the activity for this year which includes investing in a podiatry clinic, MSK direct support and a Health and Well-Being lead nurse for a year. Examples of initiatives introduced in the last year include the introduction of a health and well-being app – Kaido which included team challenges, yoga classes online, a number information sources and workbooks for mental health and Mental Health First Aid Training. We have also provided ‘Resilience’ and Managing a Remote Workforce’ training. It should be noted absence has reduced during the pandemic and we are working to sustain this reduced level going forward.</p> <p>Health and Safety have been very focussed on supporting the pandemic and ensuring we work safely as the volume of work has been high. Well-being services have concentrated on support to employees with an increase in the counselling service specifically.</p> <p>There are now four strategy documents namely the People Plan, Employee Health Well-Being Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Engagement Pan that detail the work of the HR service. All these documents have measurable outcomes, stated timelines, with accountable officers which are now being delivered. Progress and achievement can be evidenced, thus making this business as usual. As a result, this governance issue has not been carried forward to the 2021-22 action plan.</p>
6	<p>Management of increasing demand in relation to homelessness and the associated costs of housing families in temporary accommodation</p>	<p>The Service has managed to secure a £2.5m million underspend for 2020/21 by delivering on the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall number of households in Temporary Accommodation has reduced during 2020/21 • Cornerstone Temporary Accommodation and Caradoc Hall have been close to 90% occupancy • 72 properties through the Private Rented Scheme have been secured and let • The Council has now purchased 7 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) with an additional 3 in the pipeline • No families in B&B (except a short-term emergency) since Sept 2019 and no singles in B&B (except rough sleepers under ‘Everyone -In) since Sept 2020 • Homeless Preventions and reliefs were successful for 1100 households which exceeded corporate target of 750 • Agreement with a national Temporary Accommodation provider to provide 120 units of HMOs for single people at a significant saving. • Temporary Accommodation charging policy implemented, and savings secured • Accommodated over 330 people through the Government Everyone in initiative • Although Covid-19 has seen a decrease in the number of families in temporary accommodation the demand from single people has continued to increase • Working with Future Gov to implement self-service tools and interventions for those with complex needs • Implemented new Supported Housing Contracts

7	Development of a corporate data access standard	The impact of Covid-19 has meant that this has not been progressed.
8	Governance over relationships with partners and outside bodies	<p>Our continuing response to Covid-19 has reinforced the importance of a city wide One Coventry Partnership response. The One Coventry Partnership meetings held with senior officers from key partners were stepped down whilst a city wide IMT was established to manage a coherent response to Covid-19. It is envisaged that the One Coventry partnership will be refreshed and stepped up again as part of the transition out of emergency planning and national lockdown.</p> <p>Reset and recovery plans take into account City Council priorities and the changing economic geography post pandemic, levelling up, devolution and health and care integration.</p> <p>An Anchor Alliance collaboration has been established across Coventry and Warwickshire, key commitments agreed and specific actions for collaboration are under development. One Coventry plan refresh is underway.</p>
9	Governance over the programme of capital projects	Governance arrangements continue to be in place and embedded, including the City of Culture Readiness Board and the Council's Programme Delivery Board which meet regularly.
10	City of Culture legacy	<p>Direct investment secured for the city through being awarded the title of UK City of Culture 2021 has continued to grow – now reaching in excess of £115m. Of this funding, £45million is being invested in the city's infrastructure (improving public realm and highways) and £41m is being invested in the city's cultural assets (performance spaces, heritage venues and creative hubs.) Work on both these investment programmes has significantly progressed, despite the challenges presented for construction programmes through the COVID-19 pandemic. The Box at FarGo, Belgrade Theatre Phase 1 and 2, Daimler Powerhouse and Herbert Art Gallery and Museum project works have already achieved completion, along with public realm projects.</p> <p>The accommodation offer for visitors to the city has further been enhanced, through the completion of Telegraph Hotel development, which opened to the public in May 2021.</p> <p>Culture Change Coventry - the city's Cultural Compact, continues to meet regularly. The Compact is in the process of refreshing the cultural strategy, a process closely linked to a consultancy project commissioned by the City of Culture Trust to investigate the routes to a sustainable and impactful legacy from City of Culture 2021. A draft legacy plan is planned for the Summer of 2021, with strategic consultation on the draft plan due in Autumn 2021.</p>
11	Acting on the outcomes of the review of the Council's Scrutiny function	Appropriate recommendations were built into the scrutiny approach for the year including stronger scoping and prioritisation of items and more engagement of Cabinet Members. A Scrutiny Protocol and approach to work planning is being developed and training for chairs and scrutiny members has been scheduled for the start of the new municipal year and built into the new Member Development and Training programme. As appropriate actions have been completed, this governance issue has not been carried forward to the 2021-22 action plan.

12	Strengthening arrangements linked to the programme of health and safety audits undertaken	The pandemic has continued to impact on the delivery of the Audit programme. Priority and resources have been focused on mitigating the risks from COVID 19. The Audit Programme will remain under review during 2021. Embedding new arrangements will remain on hold till 'normal' working arrangements are re-established.
13	Further development of the Council's IT disaster recovery plans and processes	Various technical improvements have been made during the past twelve months such as improvements to the Council's network resilience and patching and also commissioning a new secondary data centre. Alongside this we have made improvements to remote access technologies and have been running several infrastructure modernisation programmes which have been making progress throughout the year. However, Covid-19 has impacted on the organisations capacity to be able to focus on a cross organisation working group with regards to business continuity and ICT disaster recovery. This element of this action will therefore be carried forward to 2021/22.
14	Review and update of the Social Value and Sustainability Policy	This was delayed due to the impact of Covid-19 and further consultation which was undertaken.
15	Implementation of the Local Government Ethical Standards Best Practice from the Committee on Standards in Public Life	Work is continuing to establish an overarching governance framework for devolved bodies. This will have an enhanced ability to promote best practice and to hold to account any non-compliance.
16	Implementation of the Redmond Review into the oversight of local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting	The Government issued an update on the Redmond Review's findings on 19 th May 2021. For nearly all the recommendations work is still in progress at the Government level to determine how these will be implemented. The recommendations that will require Councils to act at a local level related to (i) the governance for responding to audit findings and (ii) improving the transparency of local authority accounts. In both areas Government guidance is awaited on how Councils should implement these.

5.2 The Council acknowledges that the coronavirus pandemic has had an impact throughout 2020-21 in respect of governance, both in terms of existing arrangements and new areas of activity linked to the Council's response to the situation. This has included arrangements to support decision making, managing risk, maintaining internal controls and robust financial management. The Council has assessed the impact of Covid-19 on its arrangements as part of the work undertaken to prepare the Annual Governance Statement. This has concluded that taken as a whole, our arrangements have continued to be effective in delivering against the principles of good governance as outlined in the Local Code of Governance. Examples of this effectiveness include:

- The financial outturn position for 2020/21 reflects a better than balanced position including taking account of the costs and grant funding relating to Covid-19.

- The Chief Internal Auditor's annual opinion that moderate assurance can be given that Council's risk, control and governance arrangements are adequate and effective, which is consistent with previous opinions.
- Providing access to public meetings through webcast facilities, which also enables meetings to be viewed after the event.
- Effective delivery of elections in May 2021.
- Ensuring transparency over emergency decisions taken through formal reporting to Council, regular briefings to members and publishing decisions on the Council's website.
- Implementing a number of initiatives to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce. There has also been a reduction in sickness absence in the last year.
- Significant progress has been made in relation to the Council's programme of capital investment to maximise outcomes from the City of Culture.

Notwithstanding this, the Council recognises that currently we are not in a position to fully understand all of the longer term impacts of Covid-19 on the Council's priorities and achievement of sustainable outcomes and will need to ensure that this remains a key area of focus during the forthcoming year.

- 5.3 The Council is seeking to continuously enhance its management arrangements to improve service delivery, efficiency and value for money, whilst achieving its objectives. The review of effectiveness, including consideration of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on the Council's arrangements has informed identification of the following key challenges for 2021-22 (table two), along with the actions planned to address these matters to further enhance our governance arrangements.

Table Two

Ref	Governance issue	Planned actions 2021-22	Responsible officer	Timescale
1	Sustainable improvement in Children's Services	The following actions are planned in 2021-22: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program of quality assurance activity • Quality Assurance Visits • Service Performance reviews (six monthly) • Establishing a framework of feedback from the front line (Innovation and improvement forum) • Delivering the development plan in response to the 2021 Ofsted visit • Implementing the Continuous Improvement Plan • Delivery of this year's workforce plan 	Director of Children's Services	March 2022
2	Ensuring delivery of the	The 2021/22 budgetary control position will be closely monitored to	Director of Finance	July 2021 to January

	Council's vision and corporate objectives, in line with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy	<p>ensure that the legacy financial impact of COVID-19 can be managed alongside the other financial pressures being experienced by the Council and the need to continue to pursue a reset and recovery phase for the city.</p> <p>Work has begun to assess the range of financial scenarios facing the Council for the period from 2022/23. Once again this is likely to be undertaken without any intelligence on future local government funding plans until relatively late in the budget setting cycle. The proposals will incorporate the next stage of transformation programmes that will form part of implementing the One Coventry Plan. These proposals will be formalised through the 2022/23 Pre-Budget Report.</p>		2022
3	Raising educational standards	<p>We will refresh the school improvement principles for the 21/22 academic year and agree with the Coventry Education Partnership in early Autumn. Improving educational outcomes for children and young people with SEND and developing children and young people's emotional resilience and mental wellbeing are likely to continue to be key principles, and we will need to consider what we need in relation to education recovery, and return of OFSTED graded inspections which will be two very significant parts of the School Improvement strategy moving forward.</p>	Interim Head of Education Improvement & Standards	2021/22 academic year
4	Implementation of the Information Management Strategy	<p>A review of Data Protection training and delivery will take place to provide up to date, user friendly Data Protection training and delivery to suit various roles. Following this the new training strategy will be finalised and approved.</p> <p>Action will be taken to drive the embedding of information risk management across the organisation, including implementing the agreed actions from the Internal Audit review and implementing an appropriate information asset management solution.</p>	Head of Information Governance / Information Management Strategy Group / Senior Information Risk Owner	March 2022

5	Management of increasing demand in relation to homelessness and the associated costs of housing families in temporary accommodation	<p>The service secured a £2.5million underspend during 20/21 which included expenditure of over £1m on accommodating rough sleepers. A number of mitigations were put in place over the previous 2 years that have resulted in this improved position and will continue to have a positive impact moving forward. However, the homelessness service is demand led and it is anticipated that there will be a significant increase in demand during 2021/22. The mitigations that have been put in place ensures that the service is in a good position to deal with any increase however this will be dependent on wider Covid-19 impacts. The following actions are planned for 2021-22:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to purchase HMO temporary accommodation for single people • Seek to increase the number of homeless households accommodated by Lets Rent Coventry • Further increase number of homeless prevention and reliefs – Annual target of 1,150 • Investigate undertaking a Private Sector Leasing procurement to commence in 2022 • Work \covserv1\work with supported housing providers to secure alternative accommodation for single people in Temporary Accommodation • Continue to seek reductions in Temporary Accommodation costs • Implement a rent accounting IT system to ensure maximisation of income • Continue to minimise voids in Temporary Accommodation and meet target of 90% occupancy 	Director of Housing & Transformation / Head of Housing & Homelessness	March 2022
6	Development of a corporate data access standard	Development and implementation of a corporate access standard and protocol for all systems that hold personal data.	Members & Elections Team Manager	December 2021
7	Governance over relationships with partners and outside bodies	<p>Refresh of the One Coventry partnership as part of exit from Covid-19 emergency planning.</p> <p>Further development of system working across Coventry and Warwickshire through Anchor</p>	Deputy Chief Executive Chief Executive	December 2021 Ongoing

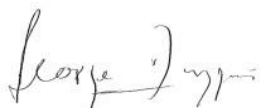
		Alliance collaboration.		
8	Governance over the programme of capital projects	The Council has an ambitious programme of capital projects, which in 2021/22 will not only see Coventry becoming UK City of Culture in Spring 2021 but will provide long term legacy benefits for the people of Coventry. Whilst providing ongoing regeneration and redevelopment of the city and supporting business rate growth, the scale of the programme requires robust governance and strategic control to ensure that the programme is delivered successfully. This is particularly important as we deal with the effects of the Covid-19 epidemic. Governance arrangements are established with delivery overseen by project boards who report to the responsible cabinet members via established briefing and reporting mechanisms. Governance is also provided via the City of Culture Readiness Board and the Council's Capital Programme Delivery Board which is chaired by the Chief Executive. In 2021/22 the focus will be on ensuring that as the programme continues to move at pace, governance arrangements remain embedded and robust and programme delivery supports the Council's wider aspirations as well as supporting the local economy as we emerge from the Pandemic.	Chief Executive	On-going
9	City of culture legacy	Current capital investment programmes focused on enhancing public realm, city spaces and cultural assets in readiness for Coventry's year as UK City of Culture will complete, with a new focus developed on legacy capital projects and the role of culture in stimulating and supporting wider city regeneration. Work to secure legacy programmes and investment from private and public sector sponsors and partners will continue across the City of Culture year. Coventry will launch a new Destination Management Organisation to market and promote the city to business and leisure tourism sectors, representing a partnership between the city's public and private sectors. Culture Change Coventry, the city's	Strategic Lead, City of Culture / Head of Service Sports, Culture, Destination & Business in-conjunction with key stakeholders /colleagues	On-going

		Cultural Compact, will refresh the City's Cultural Strategy in close consultation with the Coventry City of Culture Trust and a wide range of stakeholders. The new strategy will aim to secure a targeted, sustainable and impactful legacy from UK City of Culture 2021.		
10	Strengthening arrangements linked to the programme of health and safety audits undertaken.	There will be a continued focus on mitigating the risks from Covid-19 and the changing requirements in the workplace during 2021. It is planned to review the Audit, Inspection and Monitoring Programme in March 2022, with the expectation that a new 'normal' will have been established by then.	Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Services Manager / Health & Safety Team Leader	March 2022
11	Further development of the Council's IT disaster recovery plans and processes	A working group will be established to enhance understanding between ICT and the Resilience Team of business needs / ICT capabilities, which will support the development of robust and realistic plans and ensure that the disaster recovery and business continuity processes are more integrated and aligned. To support this, we have recently relaunched our business engagement function within ICT & Digital to help better understand service's needs. ICT disaster recovery processes will be enhanced, with supporting documents formalised and testing arrangements agreed.	Head of ICT & Digital	March 2022
12	Review and update of the Social Value and Sustainability Policy	It is planned that the updated policy will go to Cabinet for approval during 2021/22.	Head of Procurement & commissioning	September 2021
13	Implementation of the Local Government Ethical Standards Best Practice from the Committee on Standards in Public Life	Separate bodies which have been set up or are owned by the Council will be advised around the application of the Nolan principle of openness and requested to consider publication of their board agendas / minute and annual reports in an accessible place, whilst understanding any wider implications arising from this.	Director of Law & Governance	March 2022
14	Implementation of the Redmond Review into the oversight of	The Council awaits Government guidance on the review's recommendations and will seek to implement these in the manner and	Strategic Management Board / Corporate	Ongoing

	local audit and the transparency of local authority financial reporting	to the timetable established by Government.	Governance Group in-conjunction with key stakeholders	
15	To further strengthen the Council's arrangements and internal control environment around IT / Cyber Security	Alongside the implementation of Internal Audit recommendations in relation to reviews undertaken linked to IT / Cyber Security, the Council will be working towards Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation, increasing awareness of cyber security across the organisation and taking steps to ensure sufficient resources are in place to manage associated risks.	Director of Housing and Transformation / Head of ICT and Digital.	March 2022
16	Compliance with the Financial Management Code	An initial self-assessment of the Council's compliance with the Financial Management Code has concluded that the Council is in a relatively strong position with regards to having good and sustainable financial management. This position will be reviewed in 2021/22 to enable the Council to clarify and document how it meets the Code's key standards. This might include demonstrating clearly: the extent to which services provide value for money; the degree to which it is financially resilient and how well financial sustainability is reported to members; the consistency of medium term plans with service plans; the degree to which it engages with stakeholders in developing its financial strategy; the strength of its use of option appraisal methodologies; and how robustly it monitors key risks within its balance sheet monitoring.	Director of Finance	March 2022
17	Ensuring robust governance over group activities / investments	The Council will continue work to ensure that robust financial governance exists in respect of council owned companies and other investments, including further development of its arrangements where required, both within individual activities and from a corporate perspective. This includes consideration of a new overarching governance structure for some or all of the Council's wholly and partly owned companies and consideration of CIPFA guidance which will be issued in 2021/22.	Director of Finance / Director of Law and Governance	Ongoing

18	Embedding new methods of consultation and engagement	The council's approach to communications and engagement will continue to be developed, guided by lessons learnt from the trial of a new online engagement platform, methods used by partners, and new approaches established as a result of covid-19, including the establishment of a public health multi-agency engagement and participation cell and greater use of visual communications to overcome language barriers and provide key messages on a timely basis.	Director of Public Health	March 2022
19	Refresh of the One Coventry Plan	The One Coventry Plan will be refreshed during 2021/22 to reflect the Covid-19 situation and other priorities which have emerged since the last update such as City of Culture, climate change, Brexit and housing and homelessness.	Chief Executive	March 2022

5.4 We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review and we will monitor their implementation and operation, as part of our next annual review.



Cllr George Duggins
Leader of Coventry City Council



Martin Reeves
Chief Executive of Coventry City Council